Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	**)**	
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WRC-12 ADVISORY COMMITTEE	**)**	**IB Docket No. 04-286**

To: The Commission

COMMENTS OF ARRL, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AMATEUR RADIO

ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio, formally known as the American Radio Relay League, Incorporated (ARRL), by counsel and pursuant to the *Public Notice*, DA 10-372, released September 5, 2010 (the Public Notice), hereby respectfully submits its comments regarding proposals for the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference provided to the Commission by the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA). Specifically, ARRL opposes the adoption of the portion of NTIA's Agenda Item 1.10 proposal relating to the 415-526.5 kHz range as a United States position.[1]

I. Introduction and Background

1. Agenda Item 1.10 calls on the next World Radiocommunication Conference "to examine the frequency allocation requirements with regard to operation of safety systems for ships and ports and associated regulatory provisions, in accordance with Resolution **357 (WRC-07)** [.]"[2] Resolution 357, in turn, identifies a number of issues to be considered with respect to the maritime mobile service, explicitly and primarily including

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[1] ARRL does not object to the portion of the NTIA proposal relating to AIS.
[2] Agenda Item 1.10, Resolution 805 (WRC-07) (Agenda for the 2011 World Radiocommunication Conference) (conference subsequently moved to 2012) (emphasis in original).

the incorporation of new HF data exchange technologies and the introduction of automatic identification systems on VHF.[3]

2. As reflected in Document WAC/055,[4] NTIA has proposed an exclusive allocation to the maritime mobile service at 495-505 kHz, and a primary allocation to the maritime mobile service in Region 2 at 510-525 kHz. The rationale is purportedly "for [maritime mobile safety information], security related broadcasts, and data communication systems."

II. The NTIA Proposal Irreconcilably Conflicts With A Previously Adopted WAC Proposal for Agenda Item 1.23.

3. On September 1, 2009, the full WAC approved a proposal for Agenda Item 1.23 (Document WAC/053) that is fundamentally incompatible with NTIA's proposal for an exclusive allocation to the maritime mobile service at 495-505 kHz.[5] The Commission has previously concluded that it could generally support the Agenda Item 1.23 proposal in a prior Public Notice,[6] and comments timely filed regarding the proposal were unanimously supportive.[7] The Commission cannot adopt the NTIA proposal

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[3] Resolution 357 (WRC-07), particularly *considering c, e, noting a, b*.

[4] Letter from Karl B. Nebbia to Roderick Porter, September 29, 2009.

[5] WAC Draft Proposal for the Work of the Conference, Agenda Item 1.23, adopted September 1, 2009.

[6] Public Notice, *FCC Seeks Comment on Recommendations Approved by the Advisory Committee for the 2011 [sic] World Radiocommunication Conference*, DA 09-1994, September 3, 2009.

[7] The only submission as of the September 25, 2009 comment date was filed by ARRL, *Comments of ARRL, the National Association for Amateur Radio, in Response to the Public Notice Seeking Comment on Recommendations Approved by the Advisory Committee for the 2011 [sic] World Radiocommunication Conference* (September 25, 2009). The untimely advocacy of the Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) against the Advisory Committee's duly adopted and vetted proposal on Agenda Item 1.23 in comments filed in response to the instant Public Notice does not alter the proposal's duly adopted and vetted status, nor should it be considered at this time. The signatory of RTCM's comments is and has been fully engaged in the WAC's activities since its inception, serving as the Vice Chairman of Informal Working Group 1. It is inconceivable that RTCM and its representative were not actually aware of the Agenda Item 1.23 proposal as it neared approval. RTCM had notice and opportunity to object in a timely manner, prior to approval. It did not do so until untimely written comments filed more than six months after the proposal's approval on September 1, 2009, and more than five months after the designated comment date. This failure is merely one reflection of the lack of diligence of some maritime interests in timely and meaningfully elaborating their future plans in the 415-526.5 kHz frequency band.

without altering its proposal on Agenda Item 1.23, and NTIA has not suggested a reasonable alternative during Agenda Item 1.23 reconciliation efforts to this date.[8]

III. The NTIA Proposal Contemplates Inadequately Characterized, Purely Hypothetical Systems Which Are Neither In Operation Nor Properly Contemplated Under Agenda Item 1.10.

4. Agenda Item 1.10 is not an appropriate forum to consider Medium Frequency (MF) applications. The supporting Resolution 357 fails to explicitly mention MF as a solution for ship and port safety matters. As for safety in ports, which are relatively small areas, the long distance propagation characteristics of MF make this band unsuitable for addressing the Agenda Item. As for broader ship safety, the implementation of the Global Maritime Distress Safety System has rendered past safety uses of MF by the maritime mobile service obsolete and renders future uses superfluous.

5. Further, despite repeated invitations, the purported future needs of the maritime mobile service within the 415-526.5 kHz band have, at best, been poorly and vaguely defined. To date, the only attempt at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to characterize a future system known to ARRL is contained in a preliminary draft new report introduced at the November meeting of ITU-R Working Party 5B, carried forward as Annex 20 to Document 5B/417, titled, “Utilisation of the 500 kHz band for the digital broadcasting from shore-to-ships of information related to the safety and the security” [sic]. This report has not been vetted and is far from a finished product. While ARRL understands that United States maritime interests are seeking to progress work on this report at future Working Party 5B meetings, drafts presented to date have had significant technical problems and lack a justification of need. Further, the lack of system

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[8] NTIA’s proposal of no change in Document WAC/040, Letter from Karl B. Nebbia to John Giusti, August 11, 2009, has not been altered. It remains unsatisfactory for the reasons stated in ARRL’s timely filed comments of September 25, 2009.

characteristics for these hypothetical systems has precluded meaningful sharing studies in support of Agenda Item 1.23.[9]

6. Finally, despite suggestions by NTIA to the contrary, a globally harmonized allocation to the maritime mobile service already exists at 495-505 kHz, and one would exist even if additional secondary services were introduced to the band. Harmonization is a function of a common worldwide allocation, not of the exclusivity of such an allocation.

IV. Conclusion

Therefore, for all of the above reasons, ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio, respectfully requests that the Commission oppose the Agenda Item 1.10 proposal made by NTIA in accordance with the foregoing.

Respectfully submitted,

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[9] RTCM's untimely argument that sharing with the amateur service would be infeasible with a hypothetical digital data broadcast system should be discounted for this reason. Further, even the NTIA admits, in its own Agenda Item 1.10 proposal, "Based on current worldwide operational experience, other maritime applications [including those contemplated] are compatible with radiotelegraphy." **It is precisely radiotelegraphy that would be a predominant mode utilized by the amateur service at a potential secondary allocation between 415 and 526.5 kHz.**